

India Association of Memphis presents

India Fest 2015

Weddings of India



Saturday, November 7th 2015
Agricenter International, Memphis

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Picture this: You're strolling through the fest walking over the red carpet, enjoying the grandeur of Indian wedding décor, and perhaps stopping to eat your favorite Indian street food or trying something new from the variety of authentic regional festive meal. The tears sting your eyes, your nose runs, your tongue burns and you will know you're in foodie heaven! Meanwhile, an old friend that you haven't seen in some time stumbles into you and surprises you with a warm smile and embraces you with a hug. Many more friends join you and you immediately become wrapped up in the most delightful conversation. You shop, eat, enjoy the dances, smile and laugh as you talk of pleasant memories, and all things that you enjoy about India. Time passes and the fest empties as the conversation continues into the night. Eventually, with another hug, you wish your friends goodnight and leave the fest feeling happy and content. You can't help but notice you're wearing what you wear best, a smile.



Amid its noise, India Fest to me is a hushed journey of self-reflection and thankfulness to Indian culture. Engaging and enthralling. This is the voice of people. It isn't comprised of individuals. It's family. As years pass by, we build... friendships and kindred spirits. We discover. We risk. We rethink. We relearn many things. We explore our origins. Draw inspiration from things. When the sun sets, your palette is satisfied, you will add the experience from the day to your archive and return back to doing the routine things.

Whether you are an Indian or just someone looking for a fun outing with family for a day, India Fest is the place to be. It opens its arm to you with a warm embrace! Come join with your family, your friends, and of course, yourself to see new attractions, old favorites and have timeless fun. Let the road to the fest begin!

Maya Nair

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Schedule of Events

School Band Performances

10:00-11:30 am | Amphitheater

Flash Mob Dance

11:45 am | Dome Area

Malhaar Dance Performances

12:00 pm to 3:00 pm | Auditorium

Showcasing variety of Indian dances featuring participants from all age groups

Bollywood Dance Workshop

12:00 pm to 1:00 pm | Amphitheater

Youth Fashion Parade & Talent Show

01:00 pm to 02:00 pm | Youth Corner

Taekwondo

2:00 pm to 03:00 pm | Youth Corner

Youth Fashion Parade & Talent Show...contd.

03:00 pm to 04:00 pm | Youth Corner

Rangmanch Dance Performances

04:00 pm | Auditorium

Wedding themed dances featuring past winners of Rangmanch Competitions

Bollywood Medley Singing

05:00 pm | Auditorium

DJ Bollywood Night

05:30 pm | Auditorium



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Note from President of India Association of Memphis



Namaskar!

It is that time of the year, when you start seeing the sun coming up later and going to bed sooner. Also, there is that indefinable thrill, that frisson of excitement in the air that we all look forward to every year. Yes, it is much awaited India Fest time, showcasing India's rich culture and heritage.

On behalf of the India Association of Memphis (IAM), I welcome you all to the 13th India Fest. It has been a wonderful opportunity and once again this year, I feel privileged to serve the community of greater Memphis.

The theme for our annual festival is "Weddings of India". With more than 1.2 billion people in India, approximately 1000 spoken languages, and 29 culturally different states – the theme brings a lot of enthusiasm in the community. Traditional Indian weddings are known for their vastness, grandeur, and richness. The diversity is seen in every realm of Indian life starting from food and clothing to rich customs and traditions, and is extremely well reflected in Indian weddings. There will be colorful décor highlighting the traditions of different states, cultural extravaganza, and different cuisines to tempt and tantalize your palate, plethora of dance performances, cool traditional henna designs, kid's activities, and a whole lot more.

The fest has been supported by the corporate sponsors FedEx, Hilton, Methodist, Regional One Health, St Francis Hospital, Syntel, International Paper, Autozone, Service Master, Mphasis, Cummins, Landers and SunTrust. I thank all our sponsors from the bottom of my heart because without their support this would not have been possible. Apart from our sponsors, the fest has been recognized by the Memphis community leaders. This year we have received Proclamation from all city Mayors (the Mayor of Memphis, Mr. A C Wharton, the Mayor of Shelby County, Mr. Mark Luttrell, the Mayor of Germantown, Mr. Mike Palazzolo, and the Mayor of Collierville, Mr. Stan Joyner). I extend my sincere gratitude and take this opportunity to thank them for their incredible support. I also thank all our commercial vendors for their time and participation.

India fest is not only a celebration of Indian music, different cuisines, ethnicity, art and culture that we take pride in, but also a way that brings the Indian-American community together, promoting cultural diversity in the mid-south. There is great participation from local businesses, regional and charitable organizations and various schools. The kind of effort and energy that goes this festival to make it a successful one is unbelievable. I sincerely thank each and every organization for their incredible support.

I would like to felicitate leadership team for being a pillar of strength throughout the fest — Trustees Anil Menothuparambil and Vishal Chheda and advisors Vijay Kalaga and Anil Nair. It's been a pleasure working with them as one big family. Kudos to you!

There are dedicated and committed volunteers putting in their heart and soul, determined and keen for months to make this event a grand success. Thanks to volunteers for giving their precious time and exceeding all expectations. I have had the pleasure of working with talented and amazing people, Girish, Parmil, Anith, Rakesh, Amarjit, Nabiha, Farquan, Terry, Leena, Maya, Simanti, Vidya, Swati, IAM youth committee, Ramki, Shankar, Soumya, Ruth, Amin, Sam, and all volunteers of India fest. Kudos to IAM-India Fest team for putting up a great show year after year and doing such a commendable job.

In the end, I thank my husband Dr. Sridhar Shankar and my children Nikita and Rohan for their extreme patience, bearing with me and supporting me.

Here I invite you all to India Fest on Nov 7th at the Agricenter. Be a part of this huge celebration "Weddings of India". I hope you return home with a splendid experience to share with your family and friends.

Manjit Kaur

SHELBY COUNTY GOVERNMENT



PROCLAMATION

By The Mayor

WHEREAS: India Association of Memphis is a non-profit organization structured for cultural, educational, literary, civic, social and charitable purposes, organizes activities to foster a closer association amongst people with similar beliefs, and ideals; and

WHEREAS: India Fest, initiated in 2003, is an annual cultural celebration of India that has grown in popularity over the years and has attracted over 10,000 people annual, highlighting the history, food, and rich cultural heritage of India with the Shelby County community; and

WHEREAS: Each year, India Fest has a theme, and this year's Fest will define diversity through "Weddings of India" with colorful décor exhibiting the traditions of different states, a cultural extravaganza, a variety of cuisines, children's activities, music, fun, and more.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Mark Luttrell, Jr., Mayor of Shelby County, Tennessee, do hereby proclaim this day of November 7th of 2015 in honor of

India Fest

and I encourage all citizens to participate and enjoy the cuisines, performances, and shopping as part of this wonderful celebration of Indian culture.



In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of Shelby County to be affixed this 7th day of November of 2015.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Mark H. Luttrell, Jr.", is written over a horizontal line.

Mark H. Luttrell, Jr.
Mayor of Shelby County

City of Memphis



Special Recognition

WHEREAS, the City of Memphis takes great pride in its cultural diversity and invites people from all over the world to make this city their home; and

WHEREAS, India is the world's largest secular democracy and home to more than one billion people from various ethnic groups and religious faiths with sixteen official languages and hundreds of dialects; and

WHEREAS, The India Association of Memphis, Inc. (IAM) is a non-profit organization, serving the socio-cultural needs of more than 2,500 families of Indian origin who are residents of Memphis and Shelby County; and

WHEREAS, India Fest is an annual cultural celebration of India, which highlights the history, food, culture, and civilization and seeks to share that rich heritage with all the members of the community; and

WHEREAS, the City of Memphis recognizes the contributions of the members of our diverse community and the positive influence of cultural exchange on our community.

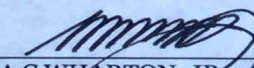
NOW, THEREFORE, I, A C WHARTON, JR., MAYOR OF THE CITY OF MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE, do hereby recognize this 13th celebration of

INDIA FEST

in the city of Memphis and I urge all citizens to participate in the festivities surrounding this annual event.



IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the city of Memphis to be affixed this 7th day of November 2015.


A C WHARTON, JR.,
MAYOR

Office of the Mayor
TOWN OF COLLIERVILLE, TENNESSEE

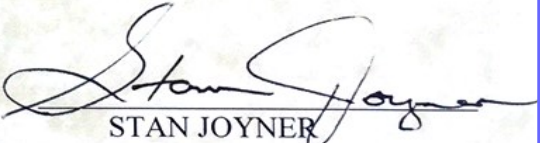


Proclamation

- Whereas, India Fest, initiated in 2003, is the annual celebration bringing people together to celebrate Indian culture, food, music and art. Since its inception in 2003, India Fest has grown to an annual attendance level of over 13,000 guests annually; and
- Whereas, India Fest is a great opportunity for everyone to explore the rich and diverse culture of India – from the Bazar Section which is a kaleidoscope of Indian music, food, art, fashion, language and literature to talent shows exhibiting Indian dance and music performed by local artists; and
- Whereas, each year India Fest has a different theme, and this year's Fest will define diversity through "Weddings of India" with colorful highlighting the traditions of different states, cultural extravaganza, a variety of food, bazaar, music, fun and more,

Now therefore, I, Stan Joyner, Mayor of the Town of Collierville, Tennessee, do hereby encourage all citizens to participate in "**INDIA FEST 2015**" on Saturday, November 7, 2015, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. at Agricenter International, 7777 Walnut Grove Road, Memphis, TN., to taste the varied cuisines, experience the art and connect with the people and resources particular to the Indian culture.




STAN JOYNER
MAYOR

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I HAVE HEREUNTO SET
MY HAND AND SEAL OF THE TOWN OF COLLIERVILLE, TENNESSEE, THIS 10TH DAY OF OCTOBER, 2015.



City of Germantown PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, India Fest, initiated in 2003, has grown in popularity by leaps-and-bounds and has consistently attracted over 10,000 people each year, and

WHEREAS, India Fest is a great opportunity for everyone to explore the rich and diverse culture of India -- from the kids' corner to the food and clothing of the various Indian states, from talent shows to dance performances by local artists, there will be something for everyone to explore, learn and enjoy, and

WHEREAS, each year India Fest has a different theme, and this year's Fest will define diversity through "Weddings of India" with colorful décor highlighting the traditions of different states, cultural extravaganza, a variety of food, bazaar, music, fun and more, and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Mike Palazzolo, Mayor of the City of Germantown, do hereby encourage all citizens to participate in

India Fest 2015

on Saturday, November 7, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., at Agricenter International, 7777 Walnut Grove Road, to savor the cuisines, experience the art and connect with services and resources particular to the Indian culture.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the City of Germantown to be affixed this 10 day of September, 2015.


Mike Palazzolo, Mayor



Namaste All,

On behalf of the India Association of Memphis, it gives me great pleasure to invite everyone to this year's celebration of India Fest. For the past 12 years, the strong and vibrant Indian American community of Memphis has organized India fest as an attempt to provide a glimpse of India to the local residents and we are excited to take yet another leap this year.

India is well known for richness of heritage, culture, traditions, food and much more and an "Indian Wedding" is event that showcases all that together. The Indian Wedding celebrations and ceremony can take days in some part of the country and just a single day in other parts. But one thing is guaranteed is that it is an exuberant fun and exciting extravaganza with big gathering of family and friends. I welcome you to explore and enjoy the vibrant wedding cultures and traditions of the great nation, India.



I would like to take a moment to thank our patrons and sponsors who, year after year, support this festival and have become an integral part of this family. I would also thank the community organizations, vendors, small business owners, merchants and esteemed guests who are the core strength of making this event a reality.

My sincere thanks to the India Fest organizing team for their commitment, their dynamism to grow India Fest and their support to throughout the year! As in previous years, this year too we had an exceptional team of volunteers with commitment and great leadership skills, without whom this event could not have happened. I thank each and every volunteer and their family members from the bottom of my heart for sacrificing their time to make this happen. Last, but not the least, I thank my wife Hemalatha and my cutie pies Naidhrua and Srihavish who have supported me through this journey.

As the end of the year draws closer, I want thank you for your commitment and support to IAM in 2015 and look forward to your continued support in 2016. We will continue to live out our mission and ensure that your contribution will also be balanced with a sense of fulfillment.

Once again, I would like to welcome you to India Fest 2015, and I hope you enjoy this event and take sweet memories home with you.

Warm Regards,

Anil Menothuparambil





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Deeply rooted in tradition, our culture is what gives us our identity. Most of us (especially those of us living away from the homeland) cling to it, even though some aspects in these modern times, do not make much sense. *Why do we do so?* Perhaps because it brings us together and provides us comfort in a foreign land. India Fest is one such annual tradition that binds us together as a community. We work together to put together a grand scale event. Splendid set ups, gracious guests, warm reception leave us amazed especially when we know that it's all live and there is no scope for a retake. But the realization of the fact that a small malfunction can create havoc, makes the people who are behind them, all the more important. Yes, it's the people behind the scene who control the strings and assure the success of an event.

Behind the scene is an army of dedicated and dexterous people to shoulder the responsibilities. India Fest that you see today is the symbiotic effort and dedication of the many talented and sincere volunteers over the years. These are our unsung heroes, working behind the scenes and out of the public's eye, who are critical to our success. The mechanics behind a festival are extensive and require commitment. Having to contact, coordinate, schedule and organize every year from scratch...it's kind of like doing a giant puzzle every year...It is kind of fun, and it is kind of frustrating, just like a puzzle. In the month of May, a group of volunteers were handpicked and astutely given the responsibility of various tracks. Most of them had no clue how the next 6-7 months would engulf their time with the colossal task of putting together the biggest event of the year.

A three day set-up, countless hours, many meticulous diagrams and several drawing boards later, the fest day arrives. Six months in the planning, one colorful theme, many event designers working together to bring it all to life. In the following snippet, I take you on a 'behind the scenes' tour that went into creating the fest but in a traditional Indian wedding style that has all the drama, masti, naach gaana, emotion and even action and ofcourse includes you, the Baraati's (Bridegroom's friends and relatives are called the 'baraati'). I've tried to depict the proceedings with a generalized concept of wedding that goes into putting up an event of this scale. So come let's take a sneak peek behind the scenes in Indian wedding style.

WEDDING PLANNERS - LEADERSHIP TEAM

An Indian wedding is a big affair that requires an outline of proper planning and so is the event this scale. Preparations should be taken and homework needs to be done before the itinerary is made for flawless execution of plan and that is the job of wedding planners. Bringing vision to life with methodical planning, strategic thinking and the ability to prepare logistically with skills that include flexibility, dedication, motivation, communication, leadership, patience and diplomacy.



From L to R : Anil Menothuparambil, Vijay Kalaga, Manjit Kaur, Anil Nair, Vishal Chheda

What is fascinating and at the same time extraordinary, is the fact that unlike previous years, India Fest this year doesn't have a Festival Director. Holding a festival was a challenge this year; but good fortune brought together a group of remarkable and passionate individuals who joined hands. With IAM Trustees - Anil Menothuparambil, Manjit Kaur and Vishal Chheda and the experienced old timers Anil Nair and Vijay Kalaga as advisors, this team redefined the leadership and the festival approach altogether. They took a proactive approach to constantly building new partnerships and network of organization and people that share its mission and values and made it possible to kick start what was deemed as a daunting task .

SANGEET PROVIDED BY CULTURALS TEAM

No marriage is complete without dance and music and that is the 'sangeet' ceremony. Vibrant colors, modern touches and traditional blessings adorn Indian wedding and the cultural team has put on an eclectic show to take you through the grandeur of this wonderful and special event of our lives. The cultural team, this year, comprises many new faces. The track lead, Swati Kirti, has previously volunteered and participated in cultural fest activities while Raksha Bhatia, Chandni Sood, Sridevi Suryaram and Jyoti R Gupta have been newly associated with the track. They have been of immense help in organizing and executing various activities leading to the grand show. The team has been ably advised by Simanti Chatterjee, a veteran in leading the cultural track for India Fest. The audio and video is managed by Raghu Gujar and Ekansh Jadhav. Cultural team has collaborated with many enthusiastic choreographers and singers for the show and with the Youth committee and the schools for band performances. The team has also provided able support to the marketing and VIP tracks with presentations and event promotions. They are very excited and ready to present the best amalgamation of Indian's diverse traditions through dance and music. So bring in your dancing shoes and join us for the day!



Simanti Chatterjee

L to R: Standing: Jyoti R. Gupta, Chandni Sood

Sitting L to R: Sridevi Suryaram, Swati Kirti, Raksha Bhatia

MEHENDI BY YOUTH TEAM



Top L to R : Nupur, Sneha, Sarthak, Shashvath, Yashwanth, Vishvesh, Shurthivani, Sanjana
2nd Row L to R: Shruthi, Reeve, Anjali, ANisha, Kavya, Swathi, Hannah, Betsy, Tanya, Sharon,
Sitting L to R :Jigna Sampat, Ramki Padmanabhan, Vidya Venkatesh

Weddings in India are fun filled events for Youth and Children to meet friends and cousins and Mehendi is one such pre-wedding event that sets the mood for the final day. The Youth corner at IndiaFest has been decorated to match the mood & theme, colorful and fun. The IAM Youth Committee and Vidya Venkatesh Track Lead and Youth Director, supported by Ramki Padmanabhan, Jigna Sampat have catered a virtual banquet of fun for all young visitors. An enthusiastic and motivated YC has been working hard to plan a variety of fun activities for the children visiting the Youth Corner. The youth executive committee led by Swathi and ably supported by Kavya as VP, Vishvesh as Secretary, Anjali as Treasurer, Sneha as Editor have

been overseeing. The décor team led by Hannah, Sharon and Nupur have worked hard to capture the colorful atmosphere of an Indian wedding with beautiful backgrounds, colorful garlands and beautiful wedding pictures. The sports/games team led by Yashwanth, helped by Anisha and Shruti has ensured young visitors to the youth corner are occupied with several games and activities including chess, ping pong and some traditional Indian wedding games. A key activity in the Youth Corner is the garbology booth which showcases the importance of recycling and using eco-friendly options. The cultural track is led by Tanya/Kavya, helped by Sanjana and Aadhya, have planned a cornucopia of entertainment activities including a kids a talent show and Bollywood workshop. Reeve will be showcasing the need for self-defense with a taekwondo workshop. The Marketing/Outreach track led by Nithya and Shashvath have been working with the team to reach out to local schools about IndiaFest. Shruthivani, Betsy, Sarthak and Reeve coordinated the school outreach and communications. The Volunteer track led by Swathi, Niharika and Kriti have been using social media and technology to actively recruit interested youth to volunteer at IndiaFest.

BARAAT SWAGAT TEAM (PROCESSION AND WELCOME)

GUEST & VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE TEAM

The baraat is received in different ways in different parts of the country. But how many guests will each family invite? Hundreds, definitely, but sometimes thousands, yes: they must be catered for, made to feel special, served, entertained and their curiosity over what to expect, satisfied. There is usually lot of last minute scrambling but to get the oohs and aahs, on the day of the fest makes it all worthwhile. Managing and meeting deliverables was the primary focus but in addition another vital task was volunteer management—recruitment and appreciation. Karthik, Pujan and veteran Darshan toiled effortlessly making sure all the requirements were met. Gathering and assimilating the needs of the entire planning team through different activities and making sure the needs were met.

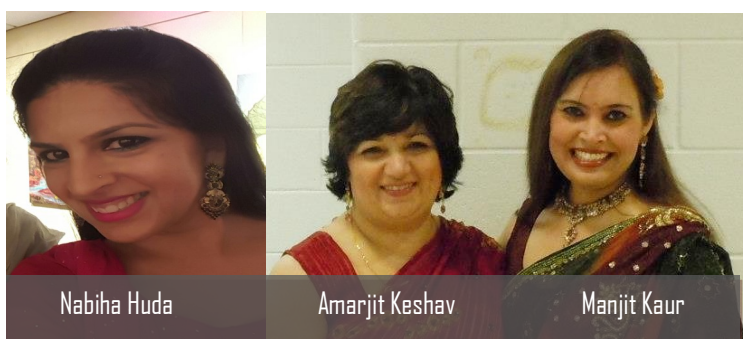


V.I.P EXPERIENCE TEAM

The extra special baraat is our VIP's, who generously support and sponsor India Fest, just what the acronym stands for – a Very Important Person. As this year's India Fest theme; *weddings of India* showcases how people belonging to various parts of India begin a new life, a new relationship – we endeavor to start new and lasting relationships with our sponsors and continue previous strong relations with those who have been supporting us thus far. Our chief guests require an equally vital team – and this year the team was led by Anil Nair accompanied by Vijay Kalaga. We hope this time too each guest comes out of India Fest with a smiling face, happy mind and satisfied palate!



WEDDING DECORATORS



Wedding decorators create that perfect look - be it flower arrangements, backdrops, vidhi mandap decoration. The décor team consists of Amarjit Keshav of Events Memphis, Manjit Kaur of IAM, Nabiha Huda of NH Events & Design, and Terry Reeves of Hicks Events. Amarjit Keshav is leading the VIP décor and will be working together with the India Fest team to mimic the theme chosen for the fest and to provide India fest guests, the taste of India. Colorful decorative fabrics draped from the ceilings providing a grand and a

festive look to the entire corridor. There will be a beautiful centerpiece "Mandap" (decorative wedding canopy) being done by NH Events & Designs. It has been a great collaborative effort of event planners with IAM to take this year's fest to greater heights of grandeur and success. With "Weddings" being the theme, we take you on a journey through India and its regions, showcasing different cultural aspects of wedding and how it differs from State to State. Our team has attempted to add the perfect touches to make your day truly memorable through our decorative Mandaps, Stages, flowers and fabrics to radiate perfection.

WEDDING INVITERS - MARKETING TEAM



From L to R : Maya, Leena, Anil M, Richa, Anil N, Manjit, Vijay

The biggest question that this team had before them was - How do we bring in 10,000 guests to the festival this year? Marketing acts as the backbone for the fest. Headed by Leena Wagle and well supported by Richa Kabra and rest of the team, this teams outreach has been through all traditional media like newspapers, magazines, posters, TV and radio as well as digital media like Facebook, Tweeter, etc. Wonderful community alliances were also created with events at the libraries across town. Apart from media, team also reached out to various groups and communities through the old fashioned, yet powerful way - the word of mouth!

FINANCING THE WEDDING FEST

BRAVE & DETERMINED SOULS (BDS)

Conducting a wedding is also about serious cash and a laborious task, not to mention the perpetual anticipation if it will be enough. With experienced veterans on this team that need no introduction, the mutual support was astounding. The track that is mainly responsible for sourcing the needed funds and bazaar booths used the culmination of a business development process that has been months in the making. Starting with a zero budget, this team plodded using pronged approach to reach out to various large, medium and small businesses and corporations to achieve brilliant results. The tremendous support received from corporate sponsors gave the team much needed boosts. Team is thankful to Anith Larson who well shouldered the responsibility of Vendor booth sales.



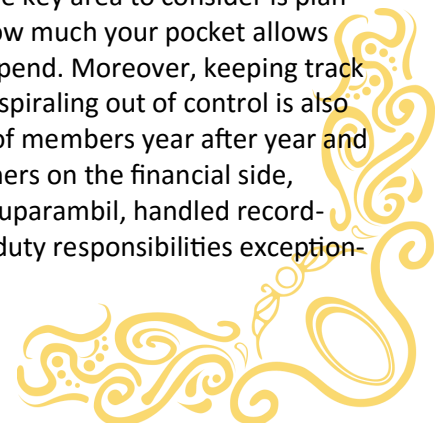
In the picture (L to R) : Standing: Vishal Chheda, Anith Larson
Sitting: Anil Menothuparambil, Manjit Kaur, Vijay Kalaga, Anil Nair



Anil Menothuparambil

Rakesh Sood

FINANCE TEAM Every penny used should get billed. And most importantly, before starting any fest planning the key area to consider is planning the right budget. It is important to know how much your pocket allows you to spend and how much are you willing to spend. Moreover, keeping track of your expenditure and stop your budget from spiraling out of control is also crucial. Effectively carried out by just a handful of members year after year and this year is no exception. Our the wedding planners on the financial side, Rakesh Sood supported by veteran Anil Menothuparambil, handled record-keeping, account management and such heavy duty responsibilities exceptionally well.



BAND BAAJA BARAAT - OPERATIONS TEAM

Everything is planned out for the big day, but most importantly you need Band Baaja Baraat to put your wedding plan into action. That's what OPERATIONS is to India Fest's anatomy, thanks to the relentless efforts of an organized, enthusiastic, and able group of volunteers. As Vince Lombardi once said, "Individual commitment to a group effort - that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work". Plenty of both were on display throughout the long hours, days and weeks of relentless planning, strategy development and painstaking execution of the marquee event. When these elements come together, excellence becomes a reality. The Operations core team, led by Girish Nallur, is thankful to Parmil Bansal for Booth arrangements, Karthik Kumar for team communications, Raghu Gujar and Ekansh Jadhav for Audio Video, Harshal Patil for parking and security, Ashish Bhatia for coordinating volunteer teams, Rakesh Sood for transportation and logistics, Vishal Chheda for contracts, and Anith Larson for vendor management. A number of additional volunteers, community and local leadership, and stakeholders also contributed. In turn, the community effort was nourishing and nurturing to every one of the team members. Turning a good idea into a great idea through collaboration, keeping an open mind, making new friends, and building trust and lasting relationships were in ample evidence throughout.



In the picture (L to R) : Vijay Kalaga, Raghu Gujar, Ekansh Jadhav, Parmil Bansal, Girish Nallur, Ashish Bhatia, Harshal Patil, Vishal Chheda, Anith Larson



Gaurav Shukla

LIGHTS, CAMERA & ACTION

That's the media team! An ever evolving team of awesome each and every year, we have a group of passionate people – photographers, videographers and editors – working together to create beautiful masterpieces! Media especially in today's times is one of the strongest modes of communication – helping to reach out to the public. Getting the point across – our creators of posters, web and print media was led by Maya Nair and was ably supported by Sujatha Santhosh and Uma Nambiar. The beautiful part about this team's work is that our memories don't fade - you can always look back and reminisce the moments through pictures, videos and souvenir books.

Always on their feet to capture the sincerity of a smile, the twinkle of an eye, and the miracle of a hug, we have Amin Lakhani and Ruth Talaiver behind the camera and Soumyadeep helping them with video. Imagine them peering through a kaleidoscope combined with quick reflexes to ensure quality coverage. They do an amazing job at capturing memories from the festival to be reminisced through the coming years.

So remember if you see Amin or Ruth around, don't forget to smile you are on CAMERA!



In the picture (L to R) : Sujatha Ramesh, Maya Nair, Uma Nambiar, Manjit Kaur, Ruth Talaiver

Standing - Amin Lakhani



Soumyadeep



INDIA FEST 2015 FAMILY

In the picture Standing L to R: Jyoti, Raksha, Swati, Ramki, Amin, Sreedevi, Chandni,

Second row -Parmil, Ekansh, Vishal, Anil M, Harshal, Ashish, Shruti, Hamnah, Kavya, Swathi, Shruti, Sanjana, Betsy, Tanya, Sneha, Anith, Karthik

Anil N, Vijay, Raghu, Girish

Sitting 1st row- Pujan, Yashwanth, Sarthak, Vidya, Shashwath, Vishwesh, Jigna,

Sitting 2nd row- Uma, Maya, Sujatha, Leena, Richa, Nupur, Anjali, Manjit, Reeva, Sharon, Anisha, Ruth

Indian Wedding Ceremony in a Gist

A Hindu wedding is called **Vivaah** and the wedding ceremony is called **Vivaah Samskaar**.

Hindu weddings are supposed to take place outside, on the earth, under a canopy known as a **mandap**. If that's not possible, you can build a mandap inside and pretend you're outdoors. Seating under the mandap can be on the ground (carpets or mats would be a good idea) or on chairs.

Haldi: The **Haldi** ceremony is an auspicious ritual performed for good luck. Generally, the bride and groom have separate haldi ceremonies at their homes. The turmeric paste is believed to be auspicious that washes off not only dirt from the bride's and groom's bodies and gives them a healthy glow, but also takes away all the negativities off them. Family members and well-wishers of the bride and groom apply the paste on the bride/groom's skin.



Mehendi: Mehendi ceremony is the most interesting pre-wedding ceremony that an Indian bride inquisitively looks forward to. Usually a day or two before the wedding, the ritual of applying mehndi or henna takes place at the bride's place, which is accompanied with spellbinding songs and folklore. Guests create a festive atmosphere by dressing in bright colors, singing traditional wedding songs, and dancing to popular music. The ceremony is a symbol of the ever deepening relationship with her future husband. There is also an interesting belief behind this ceremony, which is that the deeper the color of the mehndi on the bride's hands stronger is the love of the groom for his bride.

Baraat (The Groom's Procession): Accompanied by his family and friends in a festive procession known as the baraat, the groom arrives at the entrance of the wedding venue on a horse. The procession consists of his family and friends singing and dancing around him to music generally played by a professional dhol (large bass drum) player. The baraat is met by the bride's family at the entrance to the wedding venue.



Varmala

After the wedding procession, when the groom reaches the wedding venue he is welcomed by the bride's mother with a tilak and Aarti. He is then escorted to an elaborate stage setup or mandva to perform the Varmala ceremony. It is an essential aspect of the traditional Indian wedding when the bride and the groom exchange decorated garlands. It is an interesting belief that whosoever first put the garland around their partner's neck will dominate the relationship or will have an upper hand in the relationship.

Indian Wedding Ceremony in a Gist



Kanyadaan and Hasta Melap (Giving Away of the Bride): At this point, the bride's father places her hand in the groom's hand, officially giving away his most precious gift to the groom. The groom's sister or cousin then ties the end of the groom's scarf to the bride's sari with betelnuts, copper coins and rice, symbolizing unity, prosperity and happiness. The knot represents the eternal bond of marriage.

Significance of Rice in Hindu Ceremonies: In Hinduism, rice holds great spiritual and ritual significance as it is a staple of the Indian diet. During a Hindu wedding, rice is often sprinkled over the newlywed couple to bless them with a prosperous married life. Because rice is thought to ward off demons, it is poured into the wedding fire by the bride and bridegroom. It is also offered by the couple to their patron household deity after the completion of the marriage ceremony and sprinkled around the house by the new bride to secure blessings on their joint home. In certain parts of India the couple will stand on a pile of rice during the marriage ceremony.



Mangal Phere (Circling the Sacred Fire): The bride and groom walk around the sacred fire seven times keeping in mind the four aspirations in life: Dharma (duty to each other, family and God), Artha (prosperity), Karma (energy and passion) and Moksha (salvation). The bride, representing divine energy, leads the groom in the first three rounds, while the groom leads in the last four rounds, signifying balance and completeness. In some cultures, the bride and groom walk around the fire four times, with the bride leading in the first three rounds, and the groom leading in the final round. The bride's brother places rice grains in her hands after she completes

each round to signify his pledge to always support and protect her in times of need. Once the couple has completed the four rounds, there's a race to see who will sit down first. It is said that whoever sits down first will rule the house.

Vidai: Of all the ceremonies that take place before and after the wedding, Vidai is the only ceremony that brings tears in everyone's eyes. It is an emotional and touching moment for the bride and her family as she is ready to leave her parents' home and become a part of her husband's family. Every marriage ritual culminates in this final ceremony when the bride is bid an emotional farewell.

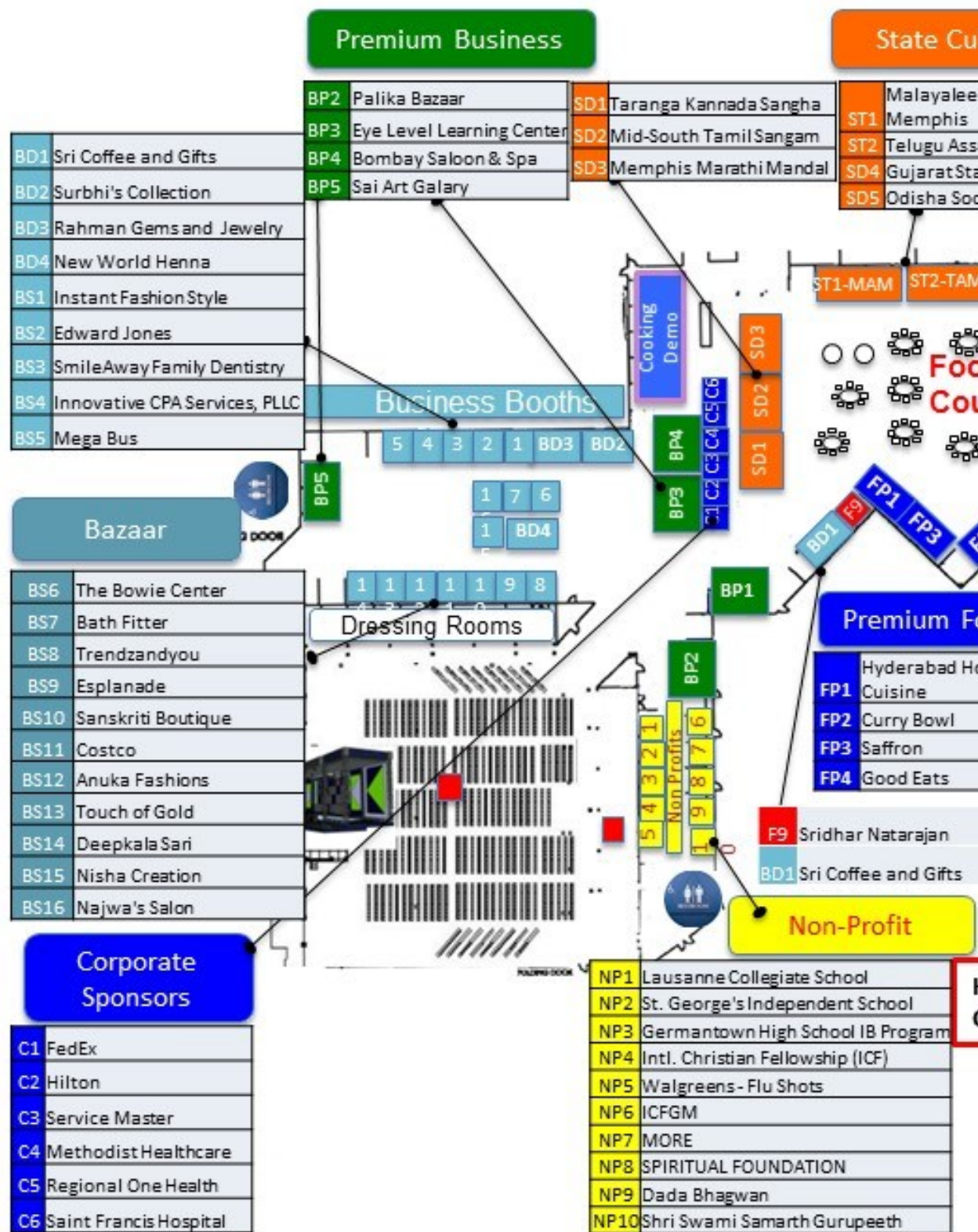


At the end, it can be said that Indian weddings are a rich tapestry of vibrant rituals and jubilant celebrations that make the Indian weddings literally a festival in itself.





❄ Festival Map ❄





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Indian culture is sometimes labelled as an amalgamation of several cultures. This is seen in every realm of Indian life starting from food & clothing to customs & traditions, is reflected in Indian marriages as well. The best way to get a hold of variety is to go a wedding from each of these cultures. Every state has different languages, religions, caste, ethnicity and there is really no shortage when it comes to different kinds of weddings. Every one of them is equally beautiful.

Weddings are filled with celebrations and rituals that are as short as 10 minutes for some to as long as several days for others. Most weddings are arranged (where the partners are planned and approved by parents and other respected family members); however love marriages (where partners decide to marry each other without family involvement or assistance) are also becoming a growing trend in the country. Either way, a wedding in India is as much a marriage between families as is of the wedding couple.

Traditional Indian Hindu weddings are generally structured into pre-wedding ceremonies, wedding day ceremonies including the *Vidaai* (handing over the bride to the groom's family) and post-wedding. Pre-wedding ceremonies include the engagement ceremony and celebrations up until the day before the wedding. The wedding venue is lavishly decorated with flowers and a sacred fireplace in the center around which the bride and groom walk in a circle (at the auspicious time / *muhurat* chosen by the priest) thereby completing the marriage. The number of circles varies within cultures. Post-wedding is what ensues after the bride leaves for the groom's home.

Lets take a sneak peek into the colorful and cultural extravaganza – the Indian Wedding.

PUNJAB



Energetic, fun, excitement, song, dance are all part of the Punjabi culture found in their weddings. Various ceremonies precede the wedding day including engagement, *Dholki / sangeet* (bridal shower), *Mehndi*, *Vatna / Haldi* ceremony. The final hours of the night before the wedding is rightfully named *Jaggo* (staying awake) is where the relatives of the bride and groom stay up all night dancing, with a copper / brass vessel on their head filled with mustard oil and lit up. They also shake a long stick with bells and go to family and friends' house where they dance, eat, burst fireworks and then move on.

Chuda is the first function on the wedding day; where a set of red and cream ivory bangles are touched by all present giving their heartfelt wishes for a happy married life to the couple and placed on the bride's hand by the bride's uncle after dipping it in a milk and water concoction. The bangles, usually 21 (which have now changed as per the bride's choice) is worn by the bride for a year after marriage – indicating she is newly married. After the wedding, there is a fun tradition of the bride's sister hiding the groom's shoes and they charge the groom a fee for its return. *Vidaai / Doli* marks the bride's departure from her parental home where she throws puffed rice over her head conveying good wishes for her parents.

GUJARAT



Gujarati weddings are similar to Punjabi weddings with their color, splendor, fun and dance. The night before the wedding, the family members perform *Garba*, the traditional Gujarati dance. The day of the wedding, for *Ponkhana* the bride's mother welcomes the groom with *aarti* (holy lamp) and playfully grabbing the groom's nose. The groom then steps forward to crush earthen pots into small pieces signifying the power to overcome any obstacles in his married life.

After the groom is welcomed to the *mandap*, the ceremony beings with a Ganesh Pooja, a prayer to Lord Ganesha, the God of peace, happiness and prosperity. The bride's father washes the groom's feet with honey, yoghurt and ghee – which is when the bride's sisters hide the groom's shoes which he can get back only after bribing the girls with money.

As the couple circle around the sacred fire, for a fun angle, the bride and the groom compete at the end of the last *phera* to sit back down – the one who finds a seat first is said to rule the house! *Saptapadi* is another tradition where the groom helps the bride touch seven betel nuts with her right toes while reciting the seven vows. With each chant, the groom asks for his wife's support in the ups and downs of their coming life.



MAHARASHTRA

Marathi weddings are relatively simple and elegant and usually occur in the mornings. The wedding begins with a Ganesh Puja and the bride's maternal uncle escorts her to the *mandap* where the priest chants the Sanskrit holy verses (*mangalashtakas*). A silk shawl separates the bride and the groom so they do not see each other during the marriage rituals. Both the bride and the groom should wear the *mundavalya* (string of flowers and pearls) on their heads during the ceremony. After exchanging garlands, tying the *mangalsutra* and

applying the *sindoor*, the bride has to touch seven heaps of rice with her right foot. At times, on a playful note the bride's father twists the groom's ear reminding him of his responsibilities towards the bride.

The *Varat* ritual is when the bride leaves her home for the *Grihapravesha* where she is welcomed by her mother-in-law with *aarti* and washes the couple's feet with water and milk. The bride gently kicks a pot of rice placed at the entrance door and the couple enters with their right foot first.

After the wedding, the reception is often held by the groom's side marking the welcome of a new family member.



BENGAL

Bengali weddings also follow a rich elaborate tradition that span several days including the engagement, bachelorette party and *Haldi* ceremony.

At dawn on the wedding day, the would-be-couple is taken to a nearby pond at the respective homes where they take the blessings of Goddess Ganga; they then bring home a pitcher of water from the pond. During *Sankha Porana* seven married women make the bride wear conch shell bangles – a pair of red bangles (*Paula*) followed by a pair of white bangles (*Shakha*).

The groom's family then proceeds to the wedding venue where a *baran dala* (plate) is touched to the groom's forehead then to the ground and again to the forehead. After the groom is seated at the wedding altar, the bride enters the *mandap* seated on a wooden stool called a *pidi* / *piri* and carried to the *mandap* by her brothers and uncles. Since she isn't supposed to see her groom, her eyes are covered with sacred betel leaves. Keeping her lifted on the stool, the brothers / uncles walk around the groom seven times (*Saat Paak*). After the seven rounds is when the couple takes a look at each other. They then exchange garlands three times while the bride is still seated on the *pidi*. The first night at the groom's house, the bride and the groom have to sleep in separate rooms. At *Phool Shojja* the couple spends time together as a married couple where their room is lavishly decorated with flowers and the bride gets a new saree and flower ornaments.



KARNATAKA

Kannada pre-wedding rituals begin with the *Naandi* custom performed by both the bride and the groom at their respective homes to ensure an uninterrupted marriage. The next is the *Kashi Yatre* tradition where the groom pretends to leave for Kashi (one of the most famous Hindu temples of Lord Shiva) since he has not found a suitable bride. He holds a walking stick, dhoti, fan, umbrella, coconut and a little container with rice and dal (lentils). He only stops when the maternal uncle shows him the chosen

bride.

On the wedding day the *Mandap Puja* is performed to purify the marriage hall. In the *Dhare Herdu* custom, the bride's parents place the bride's hand in the groom's and gives her away by pouring holy water on a coconut and betel placed on their hands.

After the wedding, the bride is welcomed home and the *Grihapravesh* involves the bride having to gently knock off a vessel filled with rice at the entrance door with her right foot. Then follows the name change ceremony where the groom decides the wife's name and inscribes it with a ring on a plate of rice. On the second day post-marriage, the bride's parents visit the couple and take them to the bride's home where they stay for a few days. The groom's family then in turn visits the couple and brings them back home. The final custom is the Reception organized by the groom's family in a banquet hall.

TAMIL NADU

The Tamil wedding function begins the day before the wedding with the *Panda Kaal Muhurtham* where both the families offer prayers to the God for a peaceful and uninterrupted wedding. Then is the *Pallikai Thellichal* where nine types of grains with curds are filled into sandalwood decorated earthen pots which are later immersed in the water to feed the fishes signifying blessings to the couple.

The morning of the wedding, *Haldi* ceremony, Kashi Yatra is performed. At the *mandap* of the wedding venue the bride's mother washes the groom's feet with water, *chandan* (sandalwood) and *kumkum* following which the bride enters the mandap. The bride and groom exchange garlands three times; then is given milk and banana while seated on a swing. Rice balls are thrown on them to ward off any evil. Following the tying of the *mangalsutra*; there is another ritual where the groom holds the bride's left toe and helps her tread on a grindstone kept near the ritual fire symbolizing their holy union will be as solid as rock.





KERALA

Traditional Kerala Hindu weddings are probably one of the short and sweetest that if you enter the wedding hall five minutes late you probably would have missed the wedding! It has few rituals and far lesser religious compulsions. A traditional wedding is conducted in a nearby temple, bride's residence (Tharavad) or in a convention center. Both the bride and bridegroom get the blessings of the elders by giving "Dakshina" and then touching their feet. The marriage ceremony starts with this ritual that is carried out in their respective homes. The bridegroom is welcomed to the wedding venue by the bride's family. The bride's brother washes the groom's feet and invites him to the venue. The bridegroom is usually escorted in a ceremonious

manner to the kalyana mandapam by a group of girls carrying deepams (diyas) and made to sit in a wooden plank on the right side of the canopy, which is decorated with flowers, fabric, palm fronds and banana stalks. The bride is escorted by her aunt to the mandapam, and made to sit next to the groom, even as the "nadaswaram" is being played in the background. At the auspicious moment the mangalsuthra (talli) is given to groom by bride's father and groom ties the mangalasutra around the neck of the bride to the beating of drums. This wedding ritual is called Taalikettu. The bridegroom gifts the bride a sari and a blouse on a platter, conveying to her that he will now assume the responsibility of providing for her life. This wedding ritual is called Pudamuri. Flower garlands are exchanged and the bride's father places her hand on the groom symbolizing handing over the daughter to the groom's family. The groom then holds the bride's hand and walks around the *mandap* 3 times completing the wedding ritual. This is then followed by a grand luncheon called *Sadhya*.

ANDHRA PRADESH / TELANGANA

Telugu weddings usually have the main ceremony close to midnight. On the wedding day, the couple is to take an auspicious bath to purify themselves so they can perform the sacred rites. The groom performs the Ganesh Puja at the *mandap* while the bride performs the Gauri Puja at home. During the Gauri Puja, the bride changes from her paternal *gotram* (clan) to the groom's *gotram*. Once the *puja* is complete the bride is brought in to the *mandap* by her maternal uncle in a bamboo basket. The couple is separated by a curtain and the bride's parents wash the groom's feet as he is considered an incarnation of Lord Vishnu on his wedding day. The groom in turn, whilst chanting a holy mantra will assure his in-laws three times that he will be there for his wife through joy and sorrow. *Jilakkara Bellamu* is the



main custom that is performed at the *muhurtam* where the couple is to place a paste of cumin seeds and jaggery on each other's head. *Pravara* is then performed again thus sealing the change in bride's *gotram*. The bride then changes her clothes to a white sari with a red border; the groom to a white kurta with a red border – white symbolizing purity and red representing strength. Following the lowering of the curtain, exchanging garlands and tying the *mangalsutra* is a fun custom where a ring is placed in a terracotta vessel filled with water. The couple tries to get the ring three times (groom with his right hand and the bride with her left) and the one who catches it the most times is said to be the dominant one in the house. The final custom is officially handing over the bride to the groom.



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The symbolism of the mandap goes further with each pillar being understood to represent the four parents of the couple, without whose support, love and blessings, the marriage would not have come to take place. Such is the sanctity of the mandap that a special ritual is held the day before the wedding to bless the inauguration of the mandap, known as Mandap Mahurat or Mandap Ropan. The symbolism of the mandap goes further with each pillar being understood to represent the four parents of the couple, without whose support, love and blessings, the marriage would not have come to take place. Our team has attempted to add the perfect touches to make your day truly memorable through our decorative Mandaps, Stages, flowers and fabrics to radiate perfection.

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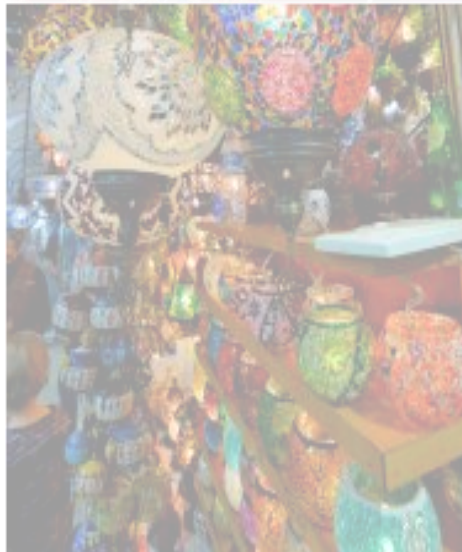


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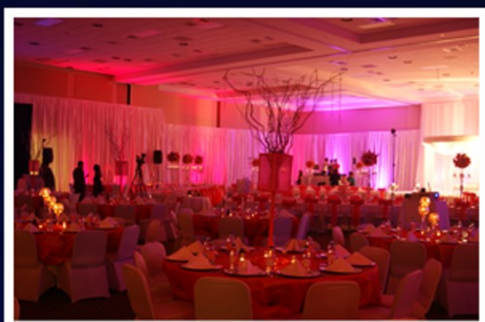
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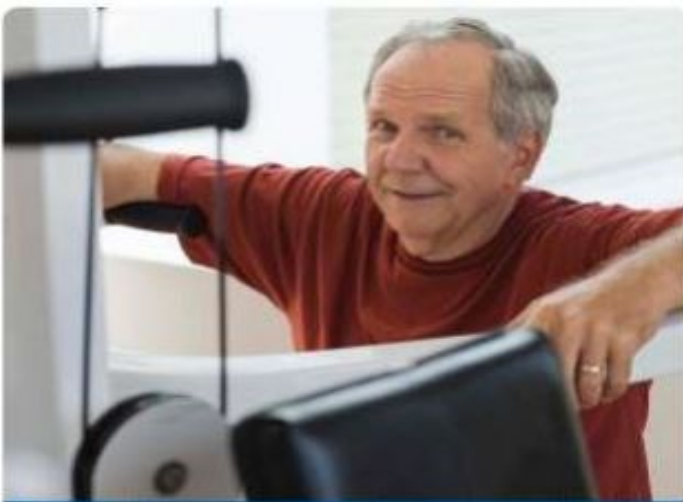
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11:45 - Flash Mob at the Dome

12:00-1:00 - Bollywood Workshop in Amphitheater

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